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AP Laserphoto

to icy Convict Lake Monday near Mammoth. Two people died.

'Horrifying' snow kills 3 kids, 4 rescuers

to safety, LaBossiere said. The 15-year-old youth, who was not identified, was treated for hypothermia at Centinela Mammoth Hospital and released, said a hospital official who declined to give her name. A paramedic was hospitalized overnight for observation, she said. The youths were playing on the ice about 200 yards from shore when the surface gave way, Strelneck said. Arriving soon after the boys fell through the snow-covered lake surface, LaBossiere said he saw one youth bobb-

State questions long-haul deal

Ecology officials say county should have notified them

Half or more of Whatcom County's garbage now winds up in Eastern Washington. Where it's going, who stands to gain, the questions and risks involved and what nearby residents have to say about getting our garbage are among the matters discussed in a four-day series continuing today.

Stories by TRASK TAPPERSON
of the Herald staff

SPOKANE — State Department of Ecology officials plan to conduct a potentially landmark investigation — and "to raise a little hell" with Whatcom and Franklin counties while they're doing it.

Their anger was spawned by what they consider flaws in the two counties' handling of a private-party agreement that resulted in Whatcom County trucking its garbage to Eastern Washington.

Two weeks ago, trucks began hauling between 100 and 145 tons of trash a day, six days a week, from Recomp Co.'s incinerator site on Slater Road to a Pasco landfill. The arrangement is expected to continue at least until June 1992.

State officials are worried about how much control the counties have on the garbage they are exchanging.

They're also miffed by what they consider both Whatcom and Franklin counties' disregard of the state's principal environmental agency.

"Our office wasn't involved; I'm chagrined," said Claude Sappington, waste management supervisor for the department's Spokane-based 13-county eastern region. "We should have been notified."

(Continued on Page A2, Col. 4)

Trucking our trash



Should hauling be regulated?

By ANDY NORSTADT
of the Herald staff

State officials are trying to determine if hauling Whatcom County garbage to Eastern Washington is an activity regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission.

If that proves to be the case, the trucking company hauling the trash could be required to get a state "garbage certificate" that would, among other things, evaluate the rates being charged and the safety of the operation.

Joe Keefe, director of the commission's transportation division, said that a letter has been sent to Martin Ruiter, owner of Martin's Feed Inc., the Lynden firm providing trucks for the long haul operation.

The letter asks Ruiter to respond to a series of questions that will be used to determine if the operation is a regulated activity or if it is exempt.

(Continued on Page A2, Col. 4)

Bureaucratic 'nitpicking' irks Van Zanten

Members of the state Department of Ecology staff are paper-shuffling troublemakers who are damaging Washington residents by nitpicking



more interested in a paper-shuffling exercise than in finding a practical solution for the benefit of the health of the county," she said.

"First they don't want us to run Cedarville (Dump). Then they don't want us to long-haul (trash). What do they want, the garbage of Whatcom County just lying along the roads? That's the only other alternative.

Seacouver 38 15 0.00

line • Clearbrook
14 0.00 39 25 0.00

County temperatures cover 24
hours, ending at 5 p.m. yesterday.

• Bellingham
46 35 0.24

Wenatchee •
26 23 0.37
Spokane
33 11 0.00

Yakima
32 26 0.00

Walla Walla
29 23 0.00

Bham report

Weather data, reported at 8:10 a.m. today
server at Bellingham International Air-

atures: High Monday, 46 degrees. Low,
ht low, 39. Currently 42.
records: High, 60 degrees (1977). Low,

ation: .02 inches Monday. Year to date

er: 30.00, steady.
uth, southeast at 13 knots.
day: 5:39 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:08 a.m.

Report

Washington — Partial clearing tonight
sday. Highs mostly upper 40s today and
dnesday. Lows tonight upper 30s to low

Washington — Chance of snow or freez-
northeast this afternoon and tonight.
idy. Wednesday with slight chance of a
rs east part. Highs in the 40s Wednes-
tonight in the upper 20s to low 30s.

NAL Weather

day, Feb. 21

forecast for daytime conditions and high temperatures

State questions county's long-haul deal

(Continued from Page A1)

Officials at the department's Olympia-Lacey headquarters didn't learn the trash-shipping plan was in the works until a day or two before Whatcom County Executive Shirley Van Zanten briefed Franklin County officials about it several months ago, according to Randy Martin, environmental planner in the agency's Solid and Hazardous Waste Program. When they did, word came through Benton-Franklin County Health Department officials rather than from Franklin County commissioners or Van Zanten's office, Martin said.

Attempts to put a long-haul deal together have been in the works for at least two years, under the auspices of Lynden businessman John Hoksbergen, who brokered the current arrangement.

The Ecology Department's inquiry has the potential to set out the department's expectations if, as anticipated, companies or local governments elsewhere along Washington's coast enter into similar long-haul agreements to solve the growing problem of trash disposal.

"It has that possibility," Sapping-

ton said. "The importation of waste to other counties is becoming a big deal. We've got to look at the impacts."

At the very least, both governments may be told to amend their solid waste management plans to spell out how that disposal component is being used and how it affects their overall trash-handling strategy.

"From our point of view, we would like to see Whatcom County address this," Martin said.

Whatcom County's new long-range plan, designed to guide it through the next decade, deals with long-hauling as an option rather than as a reality. Franklin County's plan, five years old and soon to be revised, ignores altogether the role and effects of imported waste on its overall trash-disposal scheme. In fact, under that document "the county has no real control over trash operations," said Commissioner Harold Mathews, chairman of the Bi-County Waste Advisory Council.

State law requires counties to draft new comprehensive solid waste management plans or to amend them

whenever there has been a "significant or substantial change" in how they dispose of their trash. Moreover, the local health department must approve of such changes as being consistent with the master plan.

Neither action has been taken in Franklin County.

The Whatcom County Health Department has examined and approved Recomp's transfer station. Language to reflect the new reality in trash disposal is pending before the county's Solid Waste Advisory Committee, but hasn't been adopted and sent on to the County Council.

If the Ecology Department is unhappy enough with the long-haul operation, it could appeal the Whatcom County Health Department's approval to the state Pollution Control Hearings Board.

Not only does the board have a five-to-seven month backlog of cases, but "you never know which way they're going to flip," Martin said.

Wednesday: What Tri-Cities residents and officials think about getting Whatcom County's garbage.

Bureaucratic 'nitpicking' irks Van Zanten

(Continued from Page A1)

In the meantime, the Van Zanten administration is working to create a new general purpose county landfill to replace the almost full Cedarville Dump, which was closed by the county over the weekend after years of pressure to do so from the state.

The officials' criticism "shows once more how they aren't trying to help us solve the problem," Van Zanten said. "They are just trying to be troublemakers."

"The irony is that six to eight months ago, Ecology was breathing down our backs to get Cedarville

Whatcom and Franklin counties aren't alone in that regard.

"I just sat with people from several other counties telling horror stories about DOE (the Ecology Department.) Grays Harbor County spent \$1 million, only to be told (by the department) to start over again."

"They are damaging the people of the state."

As for the state officials' criticism that Whatcom County should have specifically inserted the long-haul operation into its new solid waste management plan before the hauling began, Van Zanten said, "We fol-

would be on firm legal footing regarding a privately run long-haul operation if:

- The county adopted a Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan that listed long-hauling trash as a permissible disposal option.

- The facility receiving, loading and sending out the trash (the new Recomp Co. transfer station at its Slater Road incinerator) had all the required permits to operate.

Both conditions were met, she said. "So what other point does DOE have for involvement in this?" she